



CONVERTING CHALLENGES TO OPPORTUNITIES WHICH WOMEN EMPLOYEES DO IN THE CORPORATE SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

Every organization needs well-equipped employees in the team. But getting the right people in the right job is the biggest challenge. Mostly women employees are good at handling the new tasks in a very efficient way. But due to the ego clashes or personality differences, the women employees are not able to see a biggest growth. Only very few women executives are able to flourish well in the competitive corporate world. This article in on how the successful women have embraced the challenges & made big in the organization they work.

Key words: Women Challenges, Benefits of Women Employees, Successful Women Employees

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1. INTRODUCTION

There are lots of challenges which women employee faces in the corporate sector. Though they have potential & talent, very few are in a position to enhance them in the competitive atmosphere. But there are lots of women employees who convert all these challenges to opportunities & create a separate success strategy for themselves. Here we will be looking in detail on the challenges faces, benefits of having women employees & the success strategies of women employees will be mentioned. There are lots of issues which are pertaining to women professionals. In spite of that, they come successful. This is one of the biggest management lessons which we need to understand.

2. CHALLENGES WHICH WOMEN EMPLOYEES FACES

1. Men versus Women Issues: Men and women are always two sides of the same coin. Each one of them has their unique charisma and each one thinks and handles situation differently. While a man may be practical woman could think farfetched. But it is still a shame that irrespective of being equally talented there is always discrimination in the eyes of the beholder. In corporate environments, where people of both gender participate in all activities with equal vigor and enthusiasm such vague differentiation is the biggest challenge for a woman. One must understand that a working woman loves your concern but not your sympathy. She wishes to be recognized with her talent and not her gender. As colleagues men and women need to combine their synergies and work in union. Such a first step will definitely be the giant leap for mankind.

2. Gender Bias: Gender bias is another challenge that many women experience at their work place. Though we can say that corporate offices are bridging the gender gap slowly, private institutions and government offices are still way far behind. Jobs that require frequent travel, physical exertion etc. are still open for men only as they are considered more eligible than women. Many companies while hiring women employees ask them openly about their marriage and further family planning as they cannot afford the maternity leaves and other flexibility perks. One must understand that women are blessed with the opportunity to bring another soul into this world and this factor must not be a hindrance for their growth and progress. It is a promising change to see that many social welfare organizations like the UN are raising this concern globally and is pledging to remove gender bias in workplace.

3. Sexual Harassment: One of the most shameful and heart wrenching challenge that a women faces in working environment is the kinds of sexual abuse she is exposed to. Mostly women fall prey to cunning men who lure them on the pretext of love and sexually harass them. Many men have the notion that a working women are compromising in nature which is the foundation for such vicious deeds. To curtail this challenge, there are social welfare organizations which are discussing women empowerment on multiple forums and have raised voice against harassment of women at workplace. This technique has forced the law and order to include several severe punishments against these ruthless men. Women who stand up for their self-respect do not fail to voice out their difficulties but naive and fretful women still need to be fed with courage and must be taught to fight back against these vengeful men and show them their place.

4. Work life imbalance: Another most noticeable challenge that women of today face at work place is the work life imbalance. Differentiating personal life and professional career becomes little hard for women in general. They tend to mix up work commitments with personal priorities and that's when all the issue starts. Family feels neglected, friends feel lost and unfortunately she has to face the wrath of her entire support system just because she has forgotten to draw the line between work and life. This challenge is mostly self-imposed and to get out of this mess, the woman has to help herself. She needs to set her priorities right and plan her day well ahead. If she has to attend a family event and she is asked to attend a corporate dinner which is unplanned according to her, she needs to gather courage and politely refuse the latter as she has committed to her family. All she needs to manage is time and effort then everything falls in place.

5. Maternity leaves: Growing from a woman to a mother brings about a lot of changes in anyone. She learns to nurture a small being inside her. Elders say that as a woman becomes a mother, care and patience become her inseparable virtues. But does anyone perceive what all changes and challenges she is about to face at work place before and after the baby is born? Handling mood swings and morning sicknesses without showing a slightest discomfort, travelling to and fro with her baby belly, avoiding office parties and late night meetings as her

health may take a toll, listening to her boss's taunts as she constantly applies checkup leaves, maternity leaves etc. are simply too hard for a pregnant woman. Most of the firms have policies where maternity leaves are granted for the first two babies which is appreciable. But once the lady resumes office post her maternity break, she may be in for surprise as her role would no more be the same. She may have to begin from beginning all over again. To bridge this gap and ease the challenge, corporate firms have now included flexibility policies for women who resume their career post maternity breaks.

6. Lack of role models: Women have time and again proved their capabilities in the work front but still the top cream layer is mostly occupied by men. The challenge here is female leaders are many but role models are few. Hence when women try and look for leaders whom they can emulate, they are left behind. While male leaders are many and they train their successor with full vigor a women leader learns everything the hard way. When women look up to men for guidance and mentorship they feel they are disconnected and disoriented as there is a great difference in their objectivity and style of communication. But this challenge is slowly minimizing as more and more women are entering as managers, politicians, presidents, CEO's and in the next few years to come, there will be more leaders who will turn role models for the generations to follow.

7. Power play: For generations, women have succumbed to the power play that men have played. With the dawn of the millennium, women are ready for a tough fight. Many women leaders have stated vehemently that it took them lot of time and plenty of courage to survive the power play politics and reach their current position in their work place. Driven by emotion and instinct, for a women surviving office politics is one of the toughest challenges as it can hurt her inner soul and disturb her mental peace. Rather than falling prey to this false ego, able leaders should encourage healthy comradeship among fellow employees be it man or woman. Also, practicing the art of treating criticism as a feedback mechanism is the best way to tackle this challenge on the work front.

8. Ego clashes: Adam was the first human being in this world and then came eve. Men always try to prove their superiority while at work. An alpha male will feel his ego is crushed when he has to report to a women manager. Howsoever the lady is kind to him, he will try to find faults against her approach or mode of work etc. Women who are at a higher rank face this challenge while interacting with her peers, subordinates and superiors. Out of the three, handling her peers is the toughest job for a woman as she needs to imbibe special communication skills. But on the other hand, manipulating a man's brain is easy if you can know the nuances. The emotionally weak men need agony aunts or 3 AM friends to vent out and rant while women can keep any amount of agony and pain within them and yet smile gracefully. Working women need to en cash this ability of hers to persuade and win the trust of her peers and this will definitely help her to befriend her colleague and turn the ego clash into nothing.

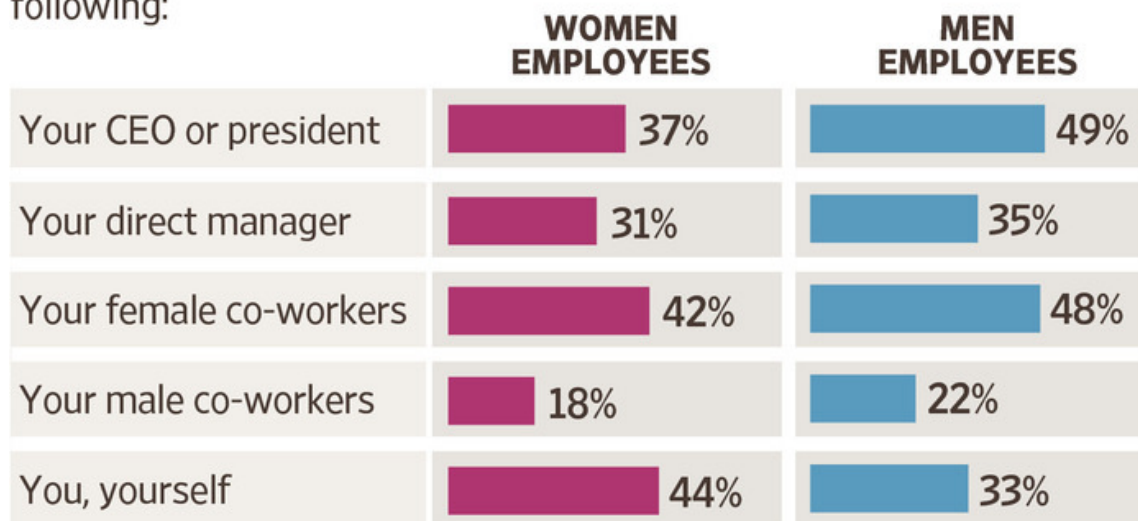
9. Restroom gossips: Office without gossip mongers is like cake without icing. Tea breaks, lunch time, rest room meetings are the venue and time when gossips are created and spread across. When a women reaches a respectable position in her work place there are always plenty of speculation about her journey to that position. Some comment on her ability while some comment about her friendly attitude. Such comments sound too harsh and many a times forces the girl to put down her papers. But on a deeper thought this challenge can be easily handled if you can sit calm and think. All you will need to do is not to reciprocate any hard feelings. Women should know to face and win over this emotional challenge in her stride. In a world where good and bad co-exists, women must grow their emotional quotient and let their work speak for them instead of engaging in verbal battles.

10. Security: Last but not the least the most threatening challenge for women at work place is their security. With more and more cases of physical assault and abuse being reported in dailies and news channels, women need to learn the art of self-defence for their security. Many organizations have employed special security services for helping their women employees to get back home at late nights. Not just working women but every girl should always be prepared to face the wrath of uncivilized men and hence must equip themselves with defence mechanism and face their challenge with oozing self-confidence.

Challenges are everywhere. Pushing oneself out of their comfort zone and trying something new and good is the challenge that one can impose on himself. More challenges one faces in life, his achievements and memories increase manifolds. Instead of dreading the challenges if one learns to treat challenges as stepping stones of success they will hardly feel its magnitude. Women have to break the soft sweet image in order to succeed in their work endeavor. Being as fierce, stable and aggressive as a lioness and working towards her goals without any distraction makes a woman achieve her goal with precision.

How Important?

About three-quarters of companies in 2015 say gender diversity is a top-three or top-ten priority for their CEO, up from 56% in 2012. But the message isn't reaching most employees. The percentage who say gender diversity is a top or most important priority for each of the following:



Source: LeanIn.Org and McKinsey & Co. Women in the Workplace 2015 survey of nearly 30,000 men and women

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But now the scenario is changing now. The importance of women employees is felt. They are extremely strategic & good at taking empowerment. Though in our country we are not so comfortable having women as boss, but that culture is also changing. Women leaders are more dynamic & fast at making decisions. Thus now we are in a place to see women employees growing well in the organization & helping the same organization to grow further.

3. ADVANTAGES WHICH WOMEN BRING AT WORK PLACE

When it comes to accomplishing goals or building solid workplace relationship, the feminine touch and skills like empathy, intuition and optimism of women work towards the benefit of the company. Their emotional intelligence, passion and helpful nature help to create healthy workplace relationship and well-rounded workforce. As such women can bring significant positive changes to the workplace being its part. The various advantages are highlighted below:

4. FEMININE ADVANTAGES AT WORKPLACE

1. Flexibility at workplace: Increased number of women at workplace not only has brought several positive changes but it also has made organizations look more closely at the problems of employees. These positive changes enable employers to address unique issues like helping workers balance professional and family life etc. With more and more women coming to workplace, the attitude and mindset of employers have been changed. With the coming of women to workforce, the management has to bring several new programs and changes that benefit both male and females. Facilities like child care, ATM machine at work, work from home, elder care, oil change etc were not offered by the management before women started to enter workforce.

2. Healthy work life balance: When it comes to create and maintain healthy balance between work and life, women outshine men. From taking care of kids and family to giving excellent performance in office, women master the art of balancing job and family pretty well. Whether single or married, women understand the value of participating in non-work related activities. They understand work is not everything, to be productive and happy at workplace some non-work related activities should be introduced or organized. Flexible work schedules, work from home facility etc., make it possible for women to maintain a good work-life balance.

3. Effective communication for collaborative work effort: According to experts, women are great communicator as they respond more effectively to visual, verbal, and emotional factors than men. Women are endowed with strong communication and networking skills using which they can encourage any collaborative or group work efforts. Usually who feels discomfort handling emotions prefer to give directives and share competitive stories with team members. On the contrary, women listen to team members carefully, share ideas, and give advice to encourage team work, while maintaining professionalism.

4. Well rounded work force: When it comes to sensitivity and intuition, women outrun men. Their sensitivity, intuition and emotional intelligence help to create a well-rounded workforce. While men lack in understanding one's unspoken words or emotion, women decode verbal cues and body language easily and this quality makes them a very effective problem solver. Even few decades back, women were perceived as irrational, sensitive and emotional creature who are totally unfit for working outside home. But now women are doing better as team leader than men due to their sensitive nature, which helps them to understand unspoken words or emotions. With this quality women are able to address and resolve any workplace problems or tension before they crop up.

5. Diversity and multidimensional interest at workplace: Women introduce multidimensional and diverse interests at workplace. While for men after work, socialization only means playing pool or smoking cigar with friends. Women prefer to do diverse things from painting, watching sports, playing instruments, cooking to playing pool and smoking cigars they do everything with same enthusiasm. Because of their multidimensional interests, women bring new topic to discuss in office, enabling others to share their views on that. Apart from influencing her employer's approach towards the benefit of employees, women bring several skills to the office that makes interaction between people easier.

6. Strong team spirit and feeling of togetherness: Women value relationships and analyze problem better. If these mind-blowing characteristics of them are brought into workplace it can result in great team building or group effort that will work for the benefit of the organization. Women use their relationship building and communication skill to manage a team efficiently. She can make every employee of her team feel that their effort and contribution have been valued. No man will lend an ear to listen to others personal problems while women have the patience to hear out and understand your emotions. The compassion she shows with her staff helps to boost their levels of productivity. Women don't usually have command-and-control approach like men, allowing the employees feel good and an important part of team. Woman can also use this skill to get information and understand others point of view.

7. Deal with tough situation with a smile on face: Women are calm and tolerant than men, making them to be composed when dealing with a tough situation or radical changes. Modern work environment is full of tension and complexities. Women, who tend to have quiet and less aggressive nature, can handle this tensions and complexities better than men. Using these qualities they understand any concern better than men and formulate a solution quickly. Women are mentally powerful than man so handling any tough situation is comparatively easy for them. They can tackle problems efficiently without giving tensions to her colleagues or team members. When confronted with an adverse situation, women look for the opportunity within. They are optimistic and face adverse situation with their full power.

8. Motivate others to excel: Women are givers. When it comes to encouraging other team members around them or allow others to flourish as a more efficient employee, women are the best. Women are great to inspire and motivate employees at workplace. They understand others emotion better and can appeal their unique needs more effectively, enabling them to perform better. They behave in a generous and friendly way at workplace to ensure everyone is okay. They try to build an open and friendly environment for the people at workplace so that everyone gives their maximum effort towards the benefit of the company.

9. Stronger ethics: Be it morality, transparency or following ethics at workplace, women prefer to do every job with fairness. They believe in fair playing following ethical codes. While most of the men focus on running the business well, women acknowledge the rights and contribution of others in pursuit of fairness. If more women are involved in workforce the chances of unethical business will reduce considerably. Using these traits woman can have a well-rounded view of a problem which helps them to take appropriate decisions.

10. More profit for company: Women are great communicator, negotiator and analyzer. When it comes to tactfully communicate and to bring more business, no one can beat women. They get into details of any matter, analyze it and come with an idea promptly. As such they become instrumental in bringing in more profits for the company by making sensible and profitable decisions and deals. Unlike men they also allow employees to share their perspective or point of view before taking any decision. Improved communication with employees and others also increases the loyalty factor in business relationships.

11. Superb management: Women are born with a mind-blowing managing skill. From handling board meetings, teaching kids, taking care of family to cooking they can do every task with much aplomb. They know how much time and skill to allocate where. With their collaborative style of management, compassion and intuitiveness they can easily inspire employees to give their best. While most of the men believe in 'cross-the-bridge-when-it-comes' theory, women prefer to do everything with a to-do list.

12. Positivity and optimism: Women are full of optimism and positivity. For them the glass is always half-full rather than half-empty. Women can sense opportunity everywhere. They are focused, strategic and keep their eye on the prize. They are blessed with the power of sensing any sign of danger before it invades. Women effortlessly manage crisis and always try to learn something from it.

5. WHAT ATTRIBUTES MAKE WOMEN BETTER LEADERS?

1. Team spirit and team centered goals: Women value relationship and try to understand the need of the employees. When these characteristics of women are brought into workplace environment, it contributes towards the benefit of the organization. They are interactive and have tremendous relationship building power which makes them more likable to all. Using her unique traits in workplace, she can motivate her staffs to put their benefit collaboratively to achieve something good for the company.

2. Great management skills: Women are endowed with great management skill by birth. From cooking, taking care of family to motivating a team to achieve something big they can manage everything efficiently. Their emphatic and collaborative style of management inspires employees to increase their level of productivity.

3. Patience: Women are patient and have the power to handle any adverse situation logically and efficiently. From listening to the problems of her employees to tackling rough situation with ease, women can manage everything being patient and calm.

4. Great analyzing skill: Studies show that women are better in decoding non-verbal cues and subtle emotional messages than men are. Due to this skill women are able to notice unspoken emotions of confusion, stress and frustration in employees. They can easily identify the problem, boost up the morale and can lead them to better productivity. As women are better in understanding the emotion or problems of others, employees feel comfortable to communicate their problem to them, making them a great manager or team leader. Women focus on employee satisfaction, and help them to flourish. Women are practical, professional and great problem solvers.

6. WHY THERE IS NEED FOR MORE WOMEN LEADERS AT WORKPLACE?

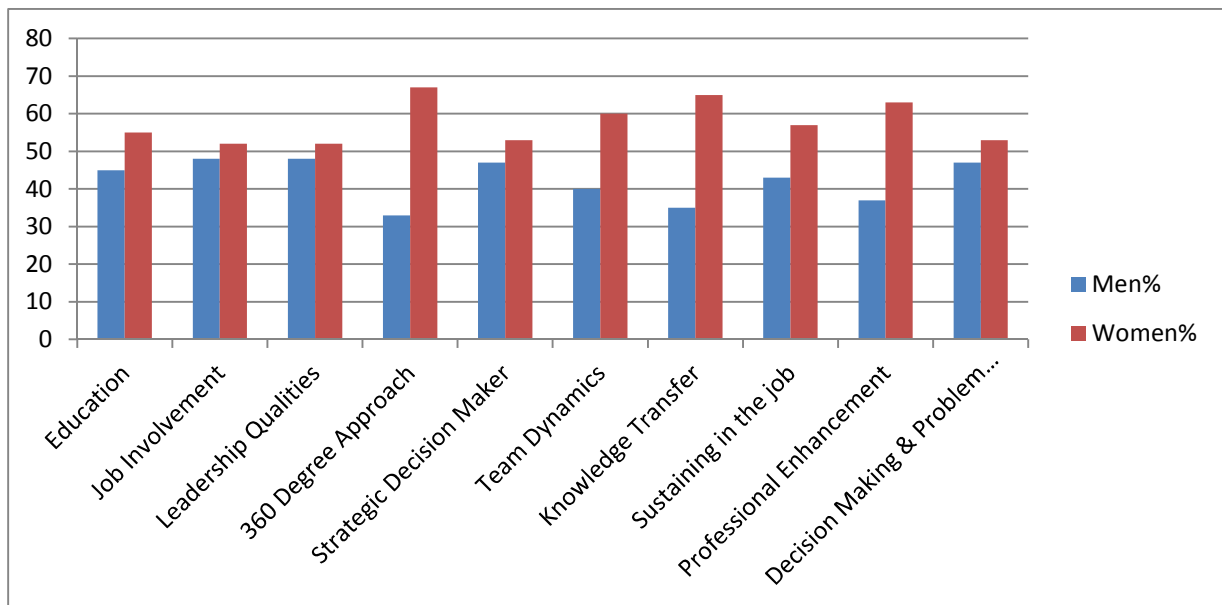
Few decades back the term 'leadership' was viewed as a masculine behavior. People have a preset conception that men can make effective leaders, while women lack this quality as they are overly emotional and sensitive. But recent researches show that fairer sex makes better leaders and employees. They are blessed with such skills that help them to perform their job and run a business more efficiently than males. Being intuitive, understanding, persuasive and working collaboratively women can handle a team better than guys.

While men are very authoritative, women use a more participative leadership style to manage a team. They share information, welcome others point of views and build strong relational skills which make them seem concerned to their team players. Women are great communicator, motivator and know how to generate a feeling of togetherness in a team. Women are givers; they enjoy inspiring others to excel in their jobs. This quality makes women brilliant long-term strategic thinkers. In today's global market scenario where communication and collaboration are highly valued to achieve success, women have a considerable advantage in the workplace. Women are inclusive, compassionate and believe in collaborative work force. Due to their emphatic nature they can decode others emotions and build strong work relationships with employees. Blessed with gifts like patience, intuition and optimism women can win everyone's heart and influence others to give their best to achieve something big.

7. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MALE LEADER & FEMALE LEADER

There is always a difference between a male team lead & a female team lead. Female team leads are more empathetic & are more supportive to the team members. The team members sustainability is also equally good compared to the male team leads. The following criteria which are mentioned here are

Attributes	Men%	Women%
Education	45	55
Job Involvement	48	52
Leadership Qualities	48	52
360 Degree Approach	33	67
Strategic Decision Maker	47	53
Team Dynamics	40	60
Knowledge Transfer	35	65
Sustaining in the job	43	57
Professional Enhancement	37	63
Decision Making & Problem Solving	47	53



8. SUGGESTIONS

Women are extremely talented & strategic. They are supposed to vitalize it and make it big. This survey had given an opportunity to come out with few suggestions which every women employee/team lead can take it into consideration

- Not to be very emotional as that becomes the weakness tool for others to explore it
- Not to give up when things are going out of control.
- Making family understand the value of yours at home & also at office that they are aware of it
- If things are given very easily, people may not value it. Branding is very important for the growth, personally & professionally
- Open up the mind when things go out of control instead of keeping it inside.

9. CONCLUSION

This study had given a diverse opportunity to understand how women professionals excel in the professional world. Though women are talented, very few are in a position to convert their challenges to opportunities. But many get sunk in the challenges. But if every woman try to explore herself, not only the corporate sector, but the entire women community will be dominating the world in the intellectual talent. Since what women do, many men cannot afford to practice. Even if they practice, the consistency will not be there. Thus women are gifted to have the consistency & the growth is also consistent for them.

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